

FUNERAL OF THE EMPEROR

George Stepney (1663–1707), British Envoy to Vienna (1702–1706)

to Charles Hedges (1649–1714), British Secretary of State (1700–1706)

Vienna, 9 May 1705

On the 6th, afternoon, the late Emperor's¹ body was opened, and no defect discovered in any part of the entrails, but a good deal of water was found upon his stomach, which is supposed to have been the cause of his death.

The same evening he was exposed in the ante-chamber after the plainest manner that can be conceived, for he had no royal robe, but lay in his ordinary habit and laced cloak, which he used to wear when he gave audience, with his hat upon his head and at his feet three old crowns (without any jewels or ornament) made up of mean tissue, and laid upon cushions of the same. One on the right was in the shape of an Imperial diadem and the other two on the left represented those of Hungary and Bohemia. One would wonder so little ceremony has been observed with a prince of the first dignity, but it seems by the ancient etiquette of this family; all his predecessors have been used after the same manner.

Nor is the mourning so strict here as in other countries, none but the great officers of the late and present Emperors' courts (viz., Grand-Master, Grand-Chamberlain, Grand-Marshal, and Master of the Horse) being suffered to cover their coaches. However, the foreign ministers supposed something more might be expected of them and, lest they should be censured for having either failed or exceeded, they deputed Mr. Wackerbarht and me to acquaint Count Martinitz (who, as Grand-Marshal of the Court, has the direction of such matters) that we thought ourselves obliged to pay the utmost marks of respect and veneration on this solemn occasion, and therefore could not but put our coaches in black, as the Imperial envoys used to do at our respective courts on the like accidents. He answered that he had already discoursed His Imperial Majesty² on that subject, who would be very well satisfied with the regard we bore to his father's memory, and would take our offer very kindly. But it having been formerly the rule that no privy councilors (except those eight officers above-mentioned) were allowed to distinguish themselves in such a manner, the Emperor was willing to dispense with us in that particular, so that our mourning extends no further than our persons and liveries.

This being the 3^d day the corpse has been exposed, it was put about noon in the same habit into a coffin of oak lined with crimson velvet, and covered with black, which was enclosed in another coffin of pewter, on which are two locks, whereof one key is lodged with the court, and the other kept by the Father-Guardian of the Capuchins, to whom Count Harrach,³ as Grand-Master assigned the body, and received from him a certificate to be communicated hereafter to the Empire as an assurance that the Emperor Leopold is dead, and consequently the present Emperor has right to assume the administration.

I should have told you that the heart was three days ago deposited with the Augustines behind the altar in a little chapel built after the form of that at Loretto, and the bowels in the cathedral of Saint Stephen.

About 10 o'clock this evening, the rest of the corpse will be transported to the Capuchins and buried there in a vault built by Emperor Matthias,⁴ where all his posterity lie interred, The little ceremony that may be observed in the procession shall be related to you in my next.

I have made my compliments of condolence to the four great officers belonging to the late Emperor, who are now no more in employment. I have also begun the like ceremony with those who are in the same station

¹ Leopold I (1640–1705), Holy Roman Emperor (1658–1705)

² Joseph I (1678–1711), Holy Roman Emperor (1705–1711)

³ Alois Thomas Raimun (1669–1742), Graf von Harrach

⁴ Matthias (1557–1619), Holy Roman Emperor (1612–1619)

under the present Emperor by making a long visit this morning to the Prince of Salm,⁵ whom for the future we are to regard as first minister. He received me very obligingly, and assured me the Emperor was resolved to cultivate by all possible means the great friendship that was between his father and Her Majesty,⁶ to whom he has written a letter du cachet by a courier dispatched yesterday, full of the most grateful expressions he could find for the great obligations Her Majesty had laid both on this branch of the family and on that which is in Portugal; and the Prince has promised me on all occasions to employ his best endeavours towards improving those principles in His Imperial Majesty, with whose spirit and resolution he hopes the allies will have reason to be satisfied more than they were during the late reign.

He then explained to me the reparation that is to be made of 4 millions of Florins which have lately been demanded of hereditary countries for carrying on the war. That Upper and lower Austria are to pay in their contributions to the army in Hungary, Moravia and Silesia are to provide for that of Italy, and the Kingdom of Bohemia for the forces in the Empire, and what we call Inner-Austria (whereby we understand Stiria, Carinthia, Carniola, Goritia, and that neighbourhood) being usually very slow and irregular in their payments, are assigned only to supply what may prove deficient in other provinces. This regulation has been proposed by the President of the Chamber, and is generally approved by the respective states of those countries.

Afterwards the Prince entered into some reflections on the affairs of Hungary, but those requiring a long discussion, for which he is not yet duly prepared, Mr. Bruyninx⁷ and I have promised him ample informations, which may help to remove many violent prejudices he formerly lay under, and set him in a right way, wherein I have the more hopes of success for that neither this Emperor, nor the Prince, are so much addicted to the Jesuits and their principles as others we have had to deal with. But nothing can be said to purpose on this subject till we hear from the deputies, of whom we have not as yet the least notice since their being with Prince Rákóczi⁸ and the Archbishop.⁹

Magyar Tudományok Akadémia, *Archivum Rákócziánum: Rákóczi Ferencz Levéltára* (Pest: Eggenberger, 1873):76–80.

⁵ Charles Theodore (1645–1710), Prince of Salm

⁶ Anne (1665–1714), Queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1702–1707) and Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (1707–1714)

⁷ Hamel Bruyninx, Dutch envoy to Vienna (1700–1738)

⁸ Francis II Rákóczi (1676–1735), leader of the Hungarian rebels

⁹ Széchenyi Pál, Archbishop of Kalocsa (1696–1710). The Hungarian rebels centered around the Archdiocese of Kalocsa.